

Friday | **April 7, 2023** | 7:00 PM ET | Upstate Medical University Arena | AHL Game 1088 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (33-25-5-3) and Syracuse Crunch (34-24-5-4) close out their season series tonight as the home-and-home series shifts to Syracuse for one final get-together at Upstate Medical University Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:00 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have earned 16 out of a possible 22 points over their last 11 games and come into the weekend with a 4-4-1-1 record in their previous 10 road games. Syracuse, meanwhile, shows a 7-2-1-0 mark over its last 10 contests inside Upstate Medical University Arena. Over the last five seasons, Rochester shows a 16-10-2-0 record on the road against the Crunch.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks erased a two-goal deficit in the second period to eventually force overtime before the Crunch took a 3-2 win Wednesday night.

Forwards **Linus Weissbach** and **Brandon Biro** both scored in the first and second periods, respectively. **Sean Malone**, **Lukas Rousek** and **Jiri Kulich** all added an assist while all but three Amerks skaters registered at least one shot on goal.

Goaltender **Malcolm Subban** (18-13-5) made 27 saves in his 36th appearance of the season. His 36 games are career-high and are tied for 15th in the AHL. Over his last eight appearances, the Toronto, Ontario, native shows a 4-0-4 record along with one shutout.

PLAYOFF PICTURE

With five games remaining in the 2022-23 regular season, Rochester is third place in the AHL's North Division standings, one point ahead of the Utica Comets, and six ahead of the Laval Rocket, who currently lead the Cleveland Monsters by one point for the fifth and final playoff spot.

The Amerks can potentially clinch a playoff berth tonight by way of a regulation win over Syracuse combined with a Laval regulation loss against Cleveland. It would mark the team's fourth straight playoff appearance dating back to the 2018 postseason. Including last year's memorable postseason run which saw Rochester advance to the North Division Finals, the Amerks have qualified for the Calder Cup Playoffs 47 times in the past 66 years.

SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut, Subban has gone 18-12-5 since over his last 35 starts, including seven straight wins between Dec. 10 to Jan. 14. The seven-game win streak was the longest of his pro career.

He was the first Amerks goaltender to post seven straight wins since Jonas Johansson won nine consecutive contests during the 2019-20 campaign.

Subban had arguably his best performance of the season during a 75-save weekend in Rochester's two-game sweep over the Charlotte Checkers in mid-December. A night after stopping a regular-season career-high 45 saves, Subban was flawless in a 30-save shutout on Dec. 17, his first in the AHL since April 8, 2017, with the Providence Bruins.

It's the first time Subban has had multiple shutouts in a season since earning three during the 2014-15 campaign with Providence. His career-high 18 wins are tied for 12th-most among all netminders coming into the weekend.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek	66	15	39	54	-1	24
Brandon Biro	49	16	35	51	4	12
Brett Murray	66	21	25	46	0	37
Jiri Kulich	58	22	25	44	-6	16
Linus Wiessbach	65	19	22	41	-13	47

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	19	8-7-2	491	.906	2.83
Malcolm Subban	36	18-13-5	988	.903	2.94
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

^=Currently reassigned to Cincinnati (ECHL)

2022-23 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Alex Barré-Boulet	64	23	56	78	25	58
Simon Ryfors	67	21	30	51	7	28
Darren Raddysh*	50	13	38	51	19	40
Gage Goncalves	66	12	37	49	7	34
Trevor Carrick	55	15	26	41	17	45

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Jack LaFontaine^	4	1-2-0	79	.919	2.43
Hugo Alnefelt	31	17-10-2	766	.910	2.61
Max Lagace	37	16-12-6	897	.887	3.35

*=Currently with Tampa Bay (NHL)

^ = Currently reassigned to Orlando (ECHL)

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch **Rochester Americans**

34-24-5-4 **Overall Record** 33-25-6-3

17-10-5-1 **Home Record** 18-11-4-1

17-14-0-3 **Road Record** 15-14-2-2

6-3-0-1 **Last 10 Games** 5-1-2-2

21-8-1-2 **Record When Scoring First** 19-9-2-2

3.49 (5th) **Goals-For Per Game** 3.24 (T-8th)

3.25 (T-21st) **Goals-Against Per Game** 3.25 (T-21st)

18.5% (19th) **Power-Play** 21.0% (11th)

80.3% (20th) **Penalty Kill** 81.4% (T-15th)

3-2 OTW @ ROC **Last Game** 3-2 OTL vs. SYR

Apr. 7 vs. LAV **Next Game** Apr. 8 @ UTC



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ROUSEK OFF AND RUNNING

After an injury limited him to just 19 regular-season games during his rookie campaign, forward **Lukas Rousek** has taken his first full season by storm.

A 2023 AHL All-Star selection, Rousek currently leads the Amerks in assists (39) and points (54) in 66 games while his 15 goals are sixth-most.

Rousek, a sixth-round selection of the Buffalo Sabres in 2019, made his NHL debut on March 27 against Montreal, scoring a goal and adding an assist while logging 9:03 of time in the 4-3 shootout loss.

He scored his first NHL goal on his first shot on his first shift, the first Sabres player to do so since **Ethan Prow**.

He's the 27th player in Sabres franchise history to score a goal in their NHL debut with Buffalo and the 186th overall to record the first goal of their career as a member of the Sabres.

Rousek also added an assist later in the game, and by doing so, became the first Sabres skater to record a goal an assist in their NHL debut with Buffalo since former Amerk Maxim Afinogenov on Nov. 10, 1999 vs. Boston.

Coming into tonight, Rousek shows 43 points (11+32) over his previous 51 games, including 15 points (4+11) in his last 13 appearances.

SHARING THE WEALTH

After producing three 20-goal scorers last season, the Amerks could potentially have five or more by the season's end.

Jiri Kulich (22) and **Brett Murray** (21) have already cracked the mark, both doing so back on March 26 versus Cleveland, while **Linus Weissbach** is closing on his first 20-goal campaign with a career-high 19 goals.

With Kulich and Murray becoming the first players this season to reach the 20-goal mark, the Amerks have now had at least one player from all but two seasons (excluding the COVID-19 shortened 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons) in the 67-year history of the franchise score 20 or more goals dating back to Bronco Horvath's team-leading 37 tallies during the Amerks' inaugural 1956-57 campaign.

The last time Rochester had at least five different 20-goal scorers in the same season was during the 2018-19 campaign when the team had six.

PROWESS ON THE BLUELINE

Entering the Jan. 19 game against Laval, **Ethan Prow** was the only Amerks defenseman to appear in every game this season. Overall, he has skated in 131 of the 137 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 62 games this season, Prow, who recorded his first three-point outing of the season on March 10 against Hartford, is tied for 21st in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 37 points while his 31 assists are currently 16th-most at his position. This season marks the fourth straight in which the veteran defenseman has reached the 20-assist mark and the fifth consecutive year with 20 or more points.

The seventh-year pro has posted 25 points (4+21) in his last 37 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 16 assists over his last 37 games.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	10	2	8	10	0	-4
Lukas Rousek	11	1	7	8	2	-3
Linus Weissbach	9	4	3	7	6	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	4	3-1-0	11	.904	2.76
Michael Houser	1	0-0-1	3	.897	2.85
Malcolm Subban	6	2-2-2	17	.914	2.85

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Simon Ryfors	11	2	8	10	2	5
Darren Raddysh	8	2	7	9	4	6
Alex Barre-Boulet	11	1	7	8	2	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	2	1-1-0	2	.951	1.22
Jack LaFontaine	1	0-1-0	1	.923	1.55
Max Lagace	10	5-3-0	28	.891	3.19

2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 21	W	4-3	32-20	1-4	3-4
Oct. 22	L	6-2	34-34	1-4	2-3
Nov. 2	W	7-2	21-26	1-5	3-3
Nov. 9	W	3-1	28-35	0-4	3-3
Dec. 7	L	5-1	24-28	0-5	1-1
Jan. 7	W	4-3	29-44	1-6	4-5
Feb. 11	W	4-1	30-33	1-4	2-2
Feb. 19	OTL	3-2	31-29	0-3	3-4
Mar. 11	L	4-2	35-39	2-7	6-6
Mar. 21	SOL	3-2	29-26	1-3	2-2
Apr. 5	OTL	3-2	20-30	1-5	2-2

SERIES NOTABLES

With **Austin Strand** making his Amerks debut against Hartford on March 10, he became the 38th overall player to appear in one game with the Amerks in 2022-23 and the 15th defenseman. He was also be the 19th different player to don the red, white and blue colors for the first time in their career.

The Amerks' six wins when trailing to begin the final period of regulation are most in the North Division, third-most in the Eastern Conference and sixth-most in the AHL this season.

Both Rochester (18-3-1-1) (22-4-2-1) and Syracuse (18-4-0-0) (24-3-0-1) enter tonight's matchup with winning records when leading after the first and second periods, respectively. On the other hand, both clubs have losing records when trailing after 40 minutes of play (ROC, 6-19-1-0) (SYR, 4-18-5-1).



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 13 points (6+7) over his last 21 games, **Linus Weissbach** is 13 points back from the team-lead with 40 points (19+22) through 65 games. By scoring his 19th goal and 41st point of the season on Wednesday against Syracuse, he established career-highs in both categories, surpassing the marks he set during his rookie campaign in 2021-22.

Brett Murray, one of six Amerks with at least 41 points on the campaign, has captured career-highs in all offensive categories from last season, including goals (21), assists (25) and points (46). The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with 20 points (7+13) in his last 23 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With nine points (5+4) over his last 23 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 48 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 14 goals and 14 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 31 points (15+16) over his last 42 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 41 points in 56 games, he reached the 40-point mark for the sixth time in his nine-year pro career. The former Calder Cup winner is also a five-time 20-goal scorer, reaching the mark four times in his first five seasons and again last season when he scored a career-high 26 goals.

Through 61 games, defenseman **Jeremy Davies** established a career-high with 11 goals, reaching the mark for the first time in his pro career while also becoming the first Amerks defenseman this season to do so. Over his last 23 games, Davies has collected five goals and seven assists for 12 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 18 points (9+9) in 32 games since Jan. 21. In the 7-1 victory over Springfield, Rosen, the Sabres' first-round selection (14th overall) in the 2021 NHL Draft, notched his first-career three-point game as well as his first-ever two-goal outing. Overall, four of his 12 goals on the season have come while on the power-play. Rosen is one of only two rookies this season to reach the 30-point mark.

Mitch Eliot tied his previous career-high in goals (3) at Providence on Feb. 26, reaching the mark in 24 fewer games than the 2021-22 campaign.

SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

Syracuse comes into the matchup sitting in second place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 34-24-5-4 overall record and have a 6-3-0-1 mark in its last 10 contests. The Crunch are two points ahead of the Amerks for the second spot in the Division coming into tonight's contest.

Alex Barré-Boulet (23+56) and Darren Raddysh (13+38) currently lead all Crunch skaters with 79 and 51 points, respectively. Barré-Boulet recorded seven points (3+4) in three games last week, earning him AHL Player of the Week honors. Despite currently being on recall with the parent Tampa Bay Lightning, Raddysh is tied for second among all defensemen in points (51) and for fifth in goals (13) in 50 games.

Goaltenders Hugo Alnefelt (17-10-2) and Max Lagace (16-12-6) have handled the majority of the duties in the crease this season for the Crunch. Alnefelt, who is one of four rookie netminders to record three shutouts, is third amongst all first-year goaltenders with a 2.61 goals-against average. Lagace, meanwhile, has appeared in 37 games. It marks the second straight and third time in his nine-year AHL career he's played in over 30 games.

A JOBST WELL DONE

Mason Jobst has made the most of his second opportunity with the Amerks as the fourth-year pro is in the process of assembling a career-year.

Through 56 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (14), assists (21) and points (35).

With an assist in the 2-1 loss in Hershey on March 18, Jobst reached the 30-point plateau for the first time in his pro career, becoming the ninth different Amerk this season to eclipse the mark.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed 11 goals and 22 points over his previous 30 games, including his first career hat trick in the 7-5 loss to the first-place Toronto Marlies back on Jan. 14. He comes into tonight with seven goals and 15 points over his previous 18 games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 48 points (18+30) over 82 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

WORKING OVERTIME

Wednesday's overtime loss against Syracuse was the seventh time in the last 10 games -- and the 19th overall -- that went beyond regulation.

The Amerks are 6-6 in overtime this season and show a 4-3 mark in shootouts.

Rochester (.563) is one of 17 teams in the AHL this season with a .500 or better winning percentage in overtime games.

Rochester tied an AHL record with 29 overtime games in 2017-18.

KEEPING IT KULICH

Ever since returning from an impressive showing at the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championship in January, **Jiri Kulich** has not only emerged as one of the team's most consistent point-getters, but as the top prospect in the Buffalo Sabres pipeline.

The third of Buffalo's three first-round picks in last year's NHL Draft, Kulich currently leads the Amerks and is eighth amongst all AHL rookies with 22 goals while his 44 points are tied for ninth-most.

With Kulich becoming the first player this season to score 20 goals, it marks the first time the Amerks had a rookie 20-goal scorer in back-to-back seasons (**Jiri Kulich** in 2022-23, **Jack Quinn** and **JJ Peterka** in 2021-22) since **Drew Stafford** in 2006-07 and **Clarke MacArthur** in 2005-06.

Kulich, the youngest regular player in the AHL, is only the fourth player in league history to score more than 20 goals during his 18-year-old season (turning 19 after Jan. 1) and first since Robert Dome of Syracuse recorded 21 in 1997-98. Kulich also becomes just the second Amerks player in franchise history to reach the mark as an 18-year-old since **Jozef Cierny** scored 27 during his only season in Rochester in 1992-93.

He was named the AHL's Player of the Week for period ending Feb. 26 after totaling six points while leading Rochester to its first three-win weekend.



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